2000-01. The budgetary increase in percentage terms is limited under most of the Heads. However, plan components of the budget and non-plan allocation for loans, grants, aid and credits to Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar have increased by a total of Rs. 700 crores over this period. While taking care of the growing expenditure arising out of opening of new Missions, bilateral technical cooperation projects/programmes, high level commitments for aid etc., the budget of the Ministry reflects austerity measures being implemented by the Government under various heads.

Agreement to hand over Kachchativu to Sri Lanka

2661. SHRI S. NIKRAIKULATHAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the terms of the original agreement on which Kachchativu was given to Sri Lanka;

(b) whether the agreement was subsequently amended;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor together with the details of the amendment;

(d) whether the Constitution of India was amended while giving Kachchativu to Sri Lanka; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) The Agreement between India and Sri Lanka on the Boundary in Historic Waters between the Two Countries and Related Matters was signed in June 1974. The Agreement states that Indian fishermen and pilgrims will enjoy access to visit Kachchativu as hitherto and will not be required by Sri Lanka to obtain travel documents or visas for these purposes.

(b) and (d) No, Sir.

(c) and (e) Do not arise.

Disappearance of Officials from Indian Missions

2662. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether certain junior level Indian Officials holding diplomatic passport disappeared during their postings at Indian Missions abroad;

(b) if so, number of such cases during the last 3 years, year-wise and country-wise;

(c) the details of the efforts made by Government to locate such officials and to ascertain motives behind their disappearance; and

(d) the fresh steps taken by Government to check misuse of diplomatic passports and to strictly follow the passport manual in case of officials working in Indian Missions abroad?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) Specific instructions have been issued by the Ministry to Missions/ Posts abroad for : (i) limiting the validity of the passports of the officials in conformity with the normal period of posting; (ii) not rendering any consular service to the officials other than providing an Emergency Certificate to return to India in cases of their unauthorized stay abroad; and (iii) impounding of the passports in cases of desertions/unauthorized stay in foreign countries.

Treaty on Biological Warfare

2663. DR. RAJA RAMANNA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India signed and ratified a UN treaty on biological warfare sometime ago;

(b) whether this was done in haste as the country faces danger to its security by the unrestricted development of weapon grade bio-materials in many countries; and

(c) if so, whether the possibility of withdrawing from the treaty has to be considered ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) The only treaty in the field of bio-warfare is the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). The BTWC was multilaterally negotiated, and India took part in these, at the conclusion of which it was opened for signature in 1972. India ratified the BTWC in 1974 and has been a State Party since then.

(c) Does not arise.